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SUBJECT: RUSSIA CHALLENGES POSITIVE JESSEN-PETERSEN REPORT
ON KOSOVO

Classified By: Ambassador Jackie Sanders, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During a June 20 Security Council meeting on the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), SRSG Soren Jessen-Petersen praised new Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu and Prime Minister Agim Ceku for action on reforms and accelerated progress on standards implementation, but called for further progress. Jessen-Petersen also called on Belgrade to allow Kosovo Serbs to participate in Kosovo's institutions and democratic processes. Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija (CCK) President Sandra Roskovic-Ivic also spoke before the Council, presenting familiar legalistic arguments and a long list of alleged incidents of ethnic violence against Serbs and other minorities in Kosovo. Jessen-Petersen offered a spirited rebuttal to Raskovic-Ivic's comments, stating he "did not recognize" the Kosovo she had described.

¶2. (C) Most Security Council members echoed the SRSG's praise of Pristina's progress on standards implementation since his last report in January and supported his call for sustained progress. They also reinforced his appeal to Belgrade to allow Serbs greater participation in the democratic process in Kosovo. Russian Permanent Representative Ambassador Churkin, however, rejected the SRSG's assessment, accusing Jessen-Petersen of "retouching reality in Kosovo." He also said Russia opposed imposition of an "arbitrary timeframe" to resolve Kosovo's status. Churkin argued that the international community should not allow itself "to be blackmailed by the argument that if a status outcome is not achieved in 2006 then there might be renewed violence." The representative of Slovakia also asserted that Jessen-Petersen's report is not "fully representative" of the situation, although he confirmed Slovakia's commitment to KFOR. End summary.

SRSG Delivers Positive Message on Standards Implementation

¶3. (C) In his last appearance before the Security Council as SRSG (he is resigning due to his wife's illness), Soren Jessen-Petersen reviewed his recent positive report on standards implementations in Kosovo. Kosovo was represented by Prime Minister Agim Ceku, who was present at the meeting as a member of the SRSG's entourage, but made no statement. It was only the second appearance at a UNSC meeting on Kosovo by a Kosovar Albanian. Kosovo, said Jessen-Petersen, had recorded significant progress on standards implementation since his February appearance before the Security Council, when he had reported a slowdown in standards implementation. Kosovo is now "a picture of a society making progress" and Prime Minister Ceku had brought "great determination and energy" to his post since March. Jessen-Petersen argued the

international community could "expect further concrete achievements over the coming months." He described the new leadership's progress in reaching out to Kosovo Serbs, including the recent establishment of a Communities Security Council. The incidence of violent incidents had decreased, said Jessen-Petersen, cautioning that it was wrong to ascribe ethnic causes to incidents before they were investigated.

¶4. (C) Belgrade, the SRSB emphasized, needed to allow Kosovo's Serbs to participate more directly in democratic processes in Kosovo and should rescind a directive to Serbs working in certain Kosovo institutions to choose between their Belgrade and Pristina salaries. Jessen-Petersen stated that the status process is now of the "highest importance in Kosovo's political life," with all activities in Kosovo taking place in its context. UNMIK now offered only diminishing marginal returns because -- after seven years -- there was not much more that could be done without a decision on status. Kosovo's new leaders are offering a vision for the future that is fully aligned with the Guiding Principles of the Contact Group.

CCK President Raskovic-Ivic: Legalistic Arguments

¶5. (C) In a lengthy statement that offered mostly legalistic arguments against independence for Kosovo, CCK President Raskovic-Ivic called on the UN Security Council to guarantee the "consistent implementation of principles of international law," recalling UNSCR 1244's reaffirmation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. Raskovic-Ivic asserted that the SRSB's report "did not accurately reflect the situation regarding the implementation of standards." Claiming that human rights were being violated on a mass-scale in Kosovo, Raskovic-Ivic presented a lengthy list

of figures on alleged ethnically motivated crimes. She agreed that it is important for Kosovo Serbs to play an active role in Kosovo's political process, but stipulated only "if their participation in these institutions is meaningful." Raskovic-Ivic alleged an unjustifiable transfer of some of UNMIK's competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), and said this action prejudged the outcome of the status process. Speaking rhetorically, she claimed confidence that the international community would "not submit to pressures to break up a democracy" and that the Security Council "would act in a just manner."

¶6. (C) At the end of the meeting, Jessen-Petersen offered a point-by-point rebuttal of her description of the situation for Kosovar Albanians, noting that he had lived there for two years and "did not recognize" the portrait of Kosovo conveyed by Raskovic-Ivic's statement. He reported that UNMIK investigations indicated that only a slim fraction of the enumerated incidents were actually confirmable cases of ethnically-motivated violence. He expressed confidence in Ceku's willingness to take further action, and stated his hope that IDP involvement in planning for the return of Kosovar Albanians would increase the number of returnees.

Russia: Strong Repudiation of SRSB's Conclusions

¶7. (C) Russian Permrep Vitaly Churkin delivered a harsh statement repudiating Jessen-Petersen's briefing on every point. Churkin alleged the UNMIK report of "retouching reality in Kosovo," and asserted that "peripheral positives on standards implementation did not compensate for overall failure." Churkin, too, cited numerous figures on supposedly ethnically motivated crimes. Churkin repeated several times that Kosovo was not a unique case. (Comment: He was apparently reinforcing recent statements by President Putin calling for a universal solution to Kosovo.) He described the non-participation of Serbs in Kosovo's institutions as proof that Kosovo was still far from achieving a multi-ethnic society. Churkin said that the international community

should not allow itself "to be blackmailed by the argument that if a status outcome is not achieved in 2006 then there might be renewed violence." Russia, he concluded, is categorically against "attempts to defer standards implementation to the post-status period" and opposes "arbitrary timeframes" that specify completion of the process in 2006." (Comment: At a dinner June 19 hosted by Greek PR Vassilakis for the SRSG and attended by U.S. Ambassador Sanders, Churkin pressed Jessen-Petersen to make explicit the consequences of not acting by the end of the year, and shook his head in disagreement as the SRSG tried to provide compelling reasons about expectations.)

US, UK and French Statements

¶18. (C) Delivering the US statement, Political-Minister Counselor William Brencick thanked Jessen-Petersen for his work as SRSG and praised President Sejdiu and Ceku and their bold calls for action, but agreed more work was needed to build confidence among Kosovo's minorities. He also called on Belgrade to allow Serb participation in Kosovo's institutions and for continued implementation of standards even after the determination of status. Brencick stressed that all parties should support Special Envoy Ahtisaari.

¶19. (C) UK Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Karen Pierce said more work would be needed to follow up on standards implementation and announced the UK looked forward to important steps by the Kosovo Assembly in the coming weeks. The UK contested the argument that Serb participation in Kosovo's institutions should be conditioned on decentralization and voiced support for Ahtisaari and the Guiding Principles of the Contact Group. French Permrep de La Sabliere echoed the praise of others for progress on standards implementation. He noted, however, that UNMIK and the Contact Group's thirteen priorities must still be rapidly implemented; such action would be important when the time came to determine status. De La Sabliere said because dialogue under Ahtisaari had intensified and Kosovo's negotiating team had made constructive proposals, it now appeared possible to find common ground.

Statements By Other Countries

¶10. (C) In Slovakia's statement, Deputy Permanent

Representative Matulay argued that the SRSG's report had failed to address key issues including: the ability of Kosovo's institutions to meet challenges of democratization and the rule of law with an emphasis on the issue of international organized crime, Kosovo's economic and political sustainability, Kosovo's preparedness for multi-ethnic coexistence and whether a post-status Kosovo could contribute to regional stability. Slovakia cited progress on standards implementation, but questioned the directness of the SRSG's report on the question of whether progress was sufficient to move forward on the status issue. Slovakia also criticized the Contact Group for "redefining and narrowing key standards" and asserted that the thirteen priority standards needed overview from the Security Council, not just from the Contact Group. Slovakia called on Belgrade to allow Serbs to participate in Kosovo's institutions and argued against an imposed solution or any action that would give the international community the impression that "the outcome of the final status talks had already been prejudged."

¶11. (C) As interested parties, Austria and Albania also made statements. Speaking on behalf of the EU, Austrian Ambassador Gerhard Pfanzelter praised accelerated implementation of standards, which he described as a prerequisite for fulfillment of Kosovo's European perspective; he also noted the EU's adoption of the "European Partnership" document last December. Albanian Permanent Representative Adrian Neritani praised Ceku and his

achievements in standards implementation and promised that Albania would play an active and constructive role in close cooperation with the international community. Neritani also called for the status process to be completed within 2006 and expressed strong support for the Guiding Principles of the Contact Group.

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